Nutrition Corner

Boost Your Mood With Food

If you’re feeling blue—or want to ward off feeling that way—studies suggest that adding the following foods may help reduce stress, ease anxiety and fight depression.

Fish. Eating oily, fatty fish (salmon, tuna, sardines, rainbow trout) and mussels will give you omega-3s—a key mood-boosting nutrient and one our bodies don’t produce on their own.

Greek Yogurt. This dairy pick is packed with more calcium than you’ll find in milk or regular yogurt, which is good news for your mood. Calcium gives your body the “Go!” command, alerting your brain to release feel-good neurotransmitters.

Eggs. Eggs are loaded with mood-promoting omega-3 fatty acids, zinc, B vitamins, and iodide, and because they’re packed with protein, they’ll also keep you full and energized long after you eat them.

Coconut. The presence of potassium in coconut is the main reason for the feel good factor. Drink your coconut or sprinkle some coconut flakes into your recipe.

Green Tea. Green tea helps in a variety of ways, and can act as a mood improver when you are feeling anxious or angry.

By now we all know the factors for maintaining good physical health: eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, avoiding tobacco and limiting alcohol. But there is another significant factor affecting our health that is often overlooked. Our emotional health— or Emotional Wellness— has a profound impact on our overall physical well-being.

Emotional wellness is the ability to be aware of and accept our feelings, to have an optimistic approach to life, and enjoy life despite its occasional disappointments and frustrations. It also involves being attentive to your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, whether positive or negative. Being emotionally well allows you to express feelings without any constraints. You will be able to enjoy emotional expression and be capable of forming supportive and interdependent relationships with others.

The term “emotional intelligence” describes the capacity to recognize their own and other people’s emotions. The term encompasses the following five characteristics and abilities:

- Self-awareness—recognizing feelings as they occur.
- Mood management—handling feelings and you reacting appropriately.
- Self-motivation—directing yourself towards a goal, despite self doubt.
- Empathy—tuning into verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Managing relationships—conflict resolution, and negotiations.

Achieving Emotional Wellness. Emotional wellness is based on your ability to be optimistic. Optimism allows you to greet all emotions with a confident attitude that allows you to learn from your mistakes. Once you have mastered emotional wellness, your life will be more balanced and you will develop a deep sense of awareness. Below are some strategies to boost your emotional wellness:

- Remind yourself to stay positive, always.
- Smile.
- Seek or accept help and support from others when needed.
- Employ gratitude to your life in order to strengthen relationships with family and friends.
- Practice being mindful and increase your awareness. This can be done through various forms of meditation.
- Accept mistakes and learn from them for next time. Mistakes are not terrible experiences; they are learning experiences.

For many people, the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance seems like an impossible goal. With so many of us torn between juggling heavy workloads, managing relationships and family responsibilities, and squeezing in outside interests, it’s no surprise that more than one in four Americans describe themselves as “super stressed.”

While we all need a certain amount of stress to spur us on and help us perform at our best, the key to managing stress lies in...